

VZCZCXRO3873  
PP RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNAG RUEHNH  
DE RUEHKO #4027 2420500  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 300500Z AUG 07  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7079  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUYNAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N541// PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA// PRIORITY  
RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY  
RUALSFJ/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA PRIORITY  
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 2884  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 5311  
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 1881  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 3631  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 6510  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8709  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1862  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4768  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 5689  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS TOKYO 004027

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,  
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;  
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;  
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;  
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;  
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;  
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - TALIBAN RELEASE OF  
SOUTH KOREAN HOSTAGES - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Thursday morning's Asahi gave top coverage to a DPJ plan to put forward an alternative proposal for helping in the reconstruction in Afghanistan.

¶1. "Hard Lessons from Hostage Crisis" The liberal Asahi editorialized (8/30): "It is a good thing that the South Koreans taken hostage by the Taliban are starting to be released and can now return home. The incident, however, is bound to have grave effects on reconstruction in Afghanistan and has left 'hard lessons' for aid workers.... The South Korean government may have paid a large amount of ransom money. Given the number of hostages, it may not have been possible to completely rule out ransom negotiations, but paying money to kidnappers will encourage similar incidents. There is concern about the safety of UN and NGO workers operating in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the international community must not allow assistance for reconstruction to stall, as that country is in the frontline in the war on terrorism. Afghanistan must be rebuilt as a free and peaceful country.... For the time being, there is little choice but to rely on the International Security Assistance Force and the US-led 'coalition of the willing' in order to maintain security and order. Swift rebuilding of the Afghan military and police are imperative so that aid workers can move around the country freely."

¶2. "No Time for Unreserved Joy" The top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri wrote (8/30): "...The ROK Blue House

announced that it accepted two conditions to win the release of the hostages: the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan by year's end and the suspension of missionary work there by South Korean Christians.... The decision to withdraw troops by the end of the year was essentially made prior to the incident.... This announcement, however, leaves the impression that this was a concession made in the course of negotiations with the Taliban. Meanwhile, the Afghan government steadfastly rejected demands for the release of Taliban prisoners. This may have prolonged the hostage standoff, but the position of not negotiating with terrorists is in line with international norms and is a matter of course.... Afghanistan must not be allowed to become a failed state, so enhanced international assistance is imperative. Japan must also continue its support, and an extension of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law is necessary."

DONOVAN